

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179081

FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT LAGOS 8605 ACTION SECSTATE INFO THE HAGUE,
KINSHASA, LISBON, LONDON, LUSAKA, MAPUTO, MOSCOW, OTTAWA,
PARIS, PRETORIA, ROME, BRUSSELS, DAR ES SALAAM, BONN, BERLIN,
HAVANA, AND USUN NEW YORK DATED JULY 12, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 8605

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, AO, NI, US
SUBJECT: ANGOLA

SUMMARY: DUTCH AMBASSADOR, WHO HAS VISITED ANGOLA TWICE
IN LAST FIVE MONTHS, BELIEVES THAT CUBANS ARE DESPERATE
FOR ACCEPTABLE WAY TO BEGIN DISENGAGING FROM ONEROUS
ANGOLAN COMMITMENTS. HE MAINTAINS RECENT ESCALATION OF
COST CHARGED FOR EACH CUBAN TECHNICIAN IS CALCULATED MOVE TO
FORCE ANGOLANS TO BRING CHEAPER PORTUGUESE TECHNICIANS
BACK. ZEYLSTRA IS PERSONALLY SKEPTICAL OF REPORTED
CUBAN/ANGOLANS SUPPORT OF SHABA II INVASION BUT BELIEVES EAST
GERMANS WERE INVOLVED. END SUMMARY

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1. DUTCH AMBASSADOR ZEYLSTRA VISITED LUANDA LATE MAY TO
PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS. FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS FROM
HIS TRIP ARE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST.

2. ACCORDING TO ZEYLSTRA THE RUSSIANS AND THE CUBANS
ARE TRAPPED IN ANGOLA IN VERY MUCH THE SAME WAY THE
US WAS CAUGHT IN VIET-NAM. NO MATTER HOW GREAT THEIR

COMMITMENT OF MILITARY AND TECHNICAL RESOURCES, ANGOLA'S SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS ARE TOO MASSIVE TO BE OTHER THAN marginally improved by such commitments. THE MORE THEY COMMIT, THE MORE OBVIOUS THEIR FAILURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY CANNOT WITHDRAW WITHOUT LOSING FACE WORLDWIDE AND SEEMING TO ABANDON THEIR IDEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES. IT IS THEREFORE NOT ONLY THE MPLA REGIME (OR THE NETO FACTION OF IT) THAT WOULD WELCOME A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. THE CUBANS AND RUSSIANS WOULD ACCEPT IT AS WELL, SINCE IT MIGHT PRODUCE A SHARING OR SPREADING OF THE NOW SOLITARY AND OVERWHELMING BURDEN TO WHICH THEY ARE SUBJECTED. IN GRASPING FOR A NON-OBVIOUS WAY IN WHICH TO ENCOURAGE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, THE CUBANS HAVE HIT UPON AN INGENIOUS SCHEME. THIS IS TO MAKE THEIR 4,000 TECHNICAL ADVISERS SO EXPENSIVE TO ANGOLA THAT THE ANGOLANS WILL BE OBLIGED FOR FINANCIAL REASONS TO INVITE THE PORTUGUESE BACK. ZEYLSTRA CLAIMS THAT RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1 OF THIS YEAR, THE AVERAGE CHARGE FOR EACH CUBAN TECHNICIAN WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED, TO \$2,000 PER MONTH PER MAN. HE CLAIMS THAT A PORTUGUESE TECHNICIAN IS CONSIDERED TO BE THREE TIMES AS USEFUL AS A CUBAN AND WOULD WORK FOR ONE-THIRD THE SALARY. THUS YOU HAVE A FACTOR OF NINE TO ONE. ZEYLSTRA SAYS THE CUBANS HOPE THAT THE

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PRACTICAL ARITHMETIC OF THIS EQUATION WILL FILTER THROUGH TO THE MPLA DECISION-MAKERS, WITH THE RESULT THAT PORTUGUESE TECHNICIANS WILL BEGIN TO BE INVITED BACK AND CUBAN TECHNICIANS CAN BEGIN TO LEAVE. NORMALIZATION WITH THE US MIGHT FOLLOW THEREAFTER.

3. THE SOLICITOUS TREATMENT PROVIDED TO THE TWO JAILED AMERICAN "MERCENARIES" STRUCK ZEYLSTRA AS ANOTHER INDICATOR OF ANGOLAN CONCERN NOT TO ANTAGONIZE THE US.

4. AS A RESULT OF WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATIONS IN LUANDA, ZEYLSTRA IS PERSONALLY SKEPTICAL OF THE REPORTED CUBAN AND ANGOLAN SUPPORT OF THE SHABA II INVASION. WHEREAS HE ADMITTED HE COULD NOT SPECIFICALLY REBUT THE GWERTZMAN ALLEGATIONS, HE FOUND NO SUPPORT FOR THEM IN HIS CONVERSATIONS IN ANGOLA. ON THE CONTRARY, HE DETECTED ANGOLAN EMBARRASSMENT THAT PHYSICAL PROPINQUITY AND EARLIER ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN CUBAN/ANGOLANS AND THE KATANGESE HAD PRODUCED SUCH ACCUSATIONS. THE EAST GERMANS, ON THE OTHER HAND, SEEMED CLEARLY INVOLVED IN SHABA II.

5. ACCORDING TO ZEYLSTRA, THE KATANGESE WERE UNINTERESTED IN WHETHER THEIR ACTIVITIES IN SHABA TOPPLED MOBUTU. THEIR CENTRAL CONCERN WAS SEPARATIST, I.E., THEY WANT TO RUN THEIR OWN SHOW IN SHABA WHETHER MOBUTU GOES OR STAYS. ZEYLSTRA CLAIMS THAT THE CUBANS FOUND THIS SECESSIONIST POSTURE UNACCEPTABLE IN TERMS OF THE GENERAL RATIONALE THEY HAVE PROPOUNDED FOR THEIR MILITARY PRESENCE IN AFRICA.

6. ZEYLSTRA IS AN ASTUTE OBSERVER WHO DRAWS UPON HIS PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT IN KINSHASA FOR SOME OF HIS INSIGHTS ON THE SHABA QUESTION. HE APPARENTLY HAD GOOD ACCESS TO INFORMED SOURCES IN ANGOLA, INCLUDING SEVERAL DUTCH TRADING FIRMS WHO HAD BEEN THERE FOR MANY YEARS AND WHO HAVE DECIDED TO STICK IT OUT, COME WHAT MAY. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE SAID THAT THE SINGLE MOST IMPRESSIVE MEMBER OF THE LUANDA DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS BRITISH CHARGE JOHN FLYNN. HE WAS MORE FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY DOMINUQUE DE CHERF, FIRST SECRETARY IN THE FRENCH EMBASSY, THAN BY DE CHERF'S BOSS, THE FRENCH CHARGE. THE DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL UK HIGH COMMISSIONER FALL'S AND MY SIMILAR HIGH REGARD FOR DE CHERF AS A RESULT OF HIS COLLABORATION WITH US DURING OUR FEBRUARY VISIT.

7. ZEYLSTRA RETIRES IN MID-AUGUST. HE WOULD RETURN ONCE MORE TO LUANDA BEFORE THEN IF IT WERE EASIER TO GET IN AND OUT. WITH NIGERIAN AIRWAYS NO LONGER FLYING ITS ONCE-WEEKLY FLIGHT, HOWEVER (LAGOS 6873), WITH UTA'S ONCE-WEEKLY PARIS/LUANDA LINKAGE TOO TIME-CONSUMING, AND WITH INTERFLUG'S DIRECT LAGOS/LUANDA CONNECTION FULLY BOOKED UNTIL AT LEAST AUGUST, HE HAS DECIDED HE CANNOT VISIT AGAIN. ZEYLSTRA SPENT TEN DAYS IN LUANDA IN MARCH IN AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO PRESENT HIS CREDENTIALS (LAGOS 3597).

8. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH SUGGEST EMBASSY HAGUE SEEK INFORMATION-SHARING DEBRIEFING FOREIGN OFFICE.

EASUM

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